REMARKS

This Response is submitted in reply to the Final Office Action dated May 17, 2005. Claims 1, 2, 5-13 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 2, 6-11 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,697,840 to Godefroid et at ("Godefriod") and U.S. Patent No. 6,750,881 to Appelman ("Appelman"). In response, claims 1, 7, 8 and 9 have been amended. Claim 6 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, thus rendering moot the rejection with respect to same. No new matter has been added by the amendments made herein. Applicants respectfully submit, for at least the reasons set forth below, that the rejections have been overcome. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the patentability of claims 1, 2, 5 and 7-13 in response to this rejection.

Claims 1, 7, 8 and 9 are the sole independent claims. Claim 1 is directed to an information processing apparatus for managing a virtual space containing a user space within the virtual space occupied by a first user, including: storage means for storing at least one list of users associated with the user space, wherein said list of users is generated by the first user and includes at least one of a second user denied admission to the user space and a second user granted admission to the user space wherein a list of predetermined spatial locations in the virtual user space is further stored, where the list of predetermined spatial locations is designated by the first user placing means for placing the list of predetermined spatial locations stored in the storage means in a predetermined user space in the virtual space in response to an instruction from the first user; notifying means for notifying the first user when a second user makes a request for admission to the user space occupied by the first user; determining means for determining whether the second user is denied admission to the user space or granted admission to the user space based on the list of users stored in said storage means; and control means for controlling admission of the second user to the user space based on a response from the first user, the response being based on the determination made by said determining means.

Claim 7 is directed to an information processing method for managing a virtual space containing user space occupied by a first user, the method having the steps of: storing at least one list of users associated with the user space, wherein a list of predetermined spatial locations in the virtual user space is further stored, where the list of predetermined spatial locations is designated by the first user; placing the list of predetermined spatial locations in a predetermined

user space in the virtual space in response to an instruction from the first user; notifying the first user when a second user makes a request for admission to the user space occupied by the first user; determining whether the second user is denied admission to the user space or granted admission to the user space based on the list of users stored in said storage means; and controlling admission of the second user to the user space based on a response from the first user, the response being based on the determination made in the determining step.

Claim 8 is directed to a storage medium having stored therein a computer-readable program for causing a computer system to perform processing which enables a plurality of users to communicate with one another in a shared virtual space formed and provided on a computer network, the program having the steps of: storing at least one list of users associated with the user space, wherein said list of users is generated by the first user and includes at least one of a second user denied admission to the user space and a second user granted admission to the user space wherein a list of predetermined spatial locations in the virtual user space is further stored, where the list of predetermined spatial locations is designated by the first user; placing the list of predetermined spatial locations in a predetermined user space in the virtual space in response to an instruction from the first user; notifying the first user when a second user makes a request for admission to the user space occupied by the first user; determining whether the second user is denied admission to the user space or granted admission to the user space based on the list of users stored in said storage means; and controlling admission of the second user to the user space based on the determination made in the determining step.

Claim 9 is directed to a program for having a computer to perform the steps of: storing at least one list of users associated with the user space, wherein said list of users is generated by the first user and includes at least one of a second user denied admission to the user space and a second user granted admission to the user space wherein a list of predetermined spatial locations in the virtual user space is further stored, where the list of predetermined spatial locations is designated by the first user, and placing the list of predetermined spatial locations in a predetermined user space in the virtual space in response to an instruction from the first user; notifying a first user when a second user makes a request for admission to a virtual space occupied by the first user; determining whether the second user is denied admission to the user space or granted admission to the user space based on the list of users stored in said storage

means; and controlling admission of the second user to the virtual space based on the determination made in the determining step.

Applicants believe that Godefroid and Appelman fail to teach or suggest at least a number of features of the claimed invention, either alone or even if properly combinable. For example, Applicants believe that Godefroid and Appelman at least fail to disclose or suggest, in part, storage means for storing a list of predetermined spatial locations in the virtual space and placing means for placing, in response to an instruction from the first user, the list stored in the storage means in predetermined space in the virtual space. Thus, the claimed invention provides users of a virtual space with registered places associated with a specific user, where the information for the registered place can be shared with a predetermined user, such that the predetermined user can obtain a list of information, relating to the space as supported in Applicants' specification, for example on page 2, lines 4-8 and on page 3, lines 11-22.

In contrast, Godefroid is directed to presence awareness in collaborative systems. The system in Godefroid enables a user to set presence awareness policies. See, Godefroid, Abstract. Nowhere in Godefroid is it disclosed or even suggested storing a list of predetermined spatial locations in the virtual space and further placing, in response to an instruction from the first user, the stored list of predetermined spatial locations in predetermined space in the virtual space.

Contrary to the Patent Office's position, Appelman fails to remedy this deficiency of Godefroid. Appelman is directed to user definable on-line co-user lists. Appelman has a user locate feature as shown in Fig. 8. The locate feature allows a user in Appelman to locate a co-user to determine whether the co-user is in a chat area or not. See, Appelman, column 5, lines 57-67. However, the locate feature in Appelman fails to teach or suggest storing a list of predetermined spatial locations in the virtual space and further placing, in response to an instruction from the first user, the stored list of predetermined spatial locations in predetermined space in the virtual space.

Further, the Patent Office has pointed to column 6, lines 44-51 in Appelman for allegedly disclosing same. However, Applicants respectfully disagree. Appelman states that:

> To share those places a user likes best on the AOL system, the user selects the Keyword/Favorite Place radio button and enters a "Keyword" (i.e., **a shortcut word defining an address**) to a system site in the provided edit box, either manually or by using a "drag and drop" action from a list of the user's favorite places in the system. Upon selecting Send, **each selected co-user will receive a**

message inviting them to access and display that online site. Emphasis added.

Accordingly, the cited art is directed to a listing of a user's favorite online sites and not a user's predetermined spatial location in the virtual space as required by the clinical invention. A co-user, according to the cited art, would be provided with the listing of the user's favorite online sites. Upon selecting one, the co-user would be provided with an invitation to go to and display one of the user's favorite sites. In contrast as claimed, a user, if on a predetermined list, would be provided with a listing of information about the predetermined virtual locations in the virtual space that have been selected by a first user. The second user, again, if predetermined to have access to the virtual location, may access the predetermined virtual location in the virtual space, thus allowing the second user to chat with the first user. Clearly, this is different from the favorite online site of the cited art, as claimed.

Based on at least these reasons, alone or in combination, Godefroid and/or Appelman fail to disclose or suggest the claimed invention and thus fail to render the claimed invention obvious.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the obviousness rejection with respect to claims 1, 2, 5 and 7-13 be withdrawn.

Claims 5 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Godefroid and Appelman as applied to claims 1 and 9, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,212,548 to DeSimone et al ("DeSimone"). Applicants respectfully submit that the patentability of Claims 1 and 9 above renders moot the obviousness rejection of Claims 5 and 12, where claims 5 and 12 depend from claims 1 and 9, respectively. In this regard, the cited art fails to teach or suggest the elements of Claims 5 and 12 in combination with the subject matter of Claims 1 and 9.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance and earnestly solicit reconsideration of same.

Respectfully submitted,

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